

**Montana WIC Program
eWIC Working Group Conference Call Notes
June 28, 2016**

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eWIC Project Schedule Update

The MT WIC Program is currently on track for our **eWIC pilot, which is still planned for February 2017**. The pilot area will include retailers in the following counties: Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, Broadwater, Powell, Madison, Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, Beaverhead and Meagher.

We are also still on track for our **rollout statewide in May 2017**.

As we navigate connectivity issues between WIC's and Solutran's computer systems, there is a small chance some delays in the project may emerge. **If** this happens, retailers will be updated immediately of any changes to the schedule.

UPC Database

The UPC database is central to how eWIC functions because it determines if a scanned food item is WIC authorized or not. We have visited all stores in the pilot area to manually collect (scan) UPC, and it's a good thing we did! We collected almost 1,000 new codes for the database.

We are now planning to collect UPC statewide, and will work with WIC staff from local clinics to do the scanning of the stores in their areas beginning in early Fall of this year. It is possible that we will also need to re-visit several stores in our pilot area to update/verify our information.

Most stores are using the IFPS PLU set for fresh fruits and vegetables, which is the PLU set that Montana WIC will import into the UPC database. Some retailers are not using this PLU set, and will be required to map their PLU codes to the IFPS set in their systems. This can be done by working with your cash register system representative to do the mapping on the back end, or by using a reference sheet provided by Montana WIC to manually type in the WIC-recognized PLU for the particular item being rung up.

eWIC Enablement

Earlier this year we received FNS funding to assist retailers in upgrading and/or installing POS systems that can conduct integrated eWIC transactions. Right now our retailer enablement budget is fully committed and we are in the process of moving forward with this process to ensure our retailers are ready for state-wide rollout next summer.

Question and Answer

How can power outages affect eWIC procedures?

Montana WIC is using an online eWIC card system (as opposed to an offline “chip card” system). Online eWIC is often similar to how debit works. If there is a power outage the system is down and no transactions occur until power is restored. This would be the same as if the store’s payment terminal lost connection.

Can retailers ring up WIC foods in the same transaction as the customer’s other items?

It depends on the type of POS system a retailer has.

On integrated systems, eWIC will operate as a “mixed basket” which is to say a participant can put all of their foods in one pile on the checkout counter and when they swipe their eWIC card, payment will be applied to those authorized items only. Participants will be trained in the clinic to swipe their eWIC card before any other form of payment, and cashiers must also help to ensure that WIC needs to be swiped first as well. This will help prevent other forms of payment (SNAP, Debit, Credit, Check, Cash) from being applied to WIC foods before the eWIC card.

For non-integrated systems with a “stand beside” device, the WIC transaction can only include WIC foods, and cannot accept other forms of payment for other types of foods. These transactions will occur similarly to how they currently do in that the WIC foods will have to be separated from the other items for purchase at the checkout counter.

How does the cashier handle it if the eWIC card is not functioning properly?

If this occurs, always ensure that your store is indeed authorized to accept WIC benefits. Check if the card looks real and is not damaged. Swipe the card a second time to double check. If there are no issues with the cash register system, ask the customer to contact their local WIC office for a verification the food package has been loaded correctly and/or to get a replacement card. If this situation occurs, the participant and retailer will be unable to complete the WIC transaction at that time.

Thank you for your participation in this call and please join us for our next quarterly call.

Next Call: October 20, 2016 at 9:30am

Call in Number: 1-866-910-4857

Passcode: 768324